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SUBJECT: Congolese foreign minister concerned about timing of FDLR resolution

Ref: State 16195

¶1. (SBU) Foreign Minister Mbusa Nyamwisi told us February 21 he agreed with the idea of an UN Security Council resolution on the FDLR but had concerns about its timing. Mbusa is the Congolese signatory to the Nairobi communique with Rwanda, and has been working to organize a meeting with FDLR faction leaders as part of the "sensitization" campaign the Congolese government committed to in the communique. He expressed concern that a resolution adopted by the Security Council prior to or immediately following the meeting could play into FDLR members' worst fears and hamstring the campaign to persuade them to lay down their arms.

¶2. (SBU) Mbusa asked that adoption of a resolution be delayed until around two weeks after the meeting. He noted the meeting with FDLR factions would take place in Kisangani, and target FDLR splinter groups at odds with the group's hardline leaders. He said that a date had not yet been agreed, but speculated on an early March timeframe. (Note: We understand from other sources that a committee at the foreign ministry has been working for some time behind the scenes to lay the groundwork for the meeting. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Mbusa appealed for timing the adoption of the resolution for around two weeks after the meeting. Under the scenario above, he recommended a target date of late March. He said that if the Security Council adopts a resolution before the meeting it would scare participants away; too soon afterward would be seen as a slap in the face for those leaders who had spent political capital to participate.

¶4. (SBU) Mbusa left the following day on extended travel. We plan to follow up with him on his return.

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